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REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Exchange of letters concerning the situation of documentation of the Fifth Committee

A. Letter dated 26 February 1998 from the Acting Chairman of the Group of 77 and China addressed to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee

Let me first express our sincere appreciation to you for your excellent leadership in bringing about the successful conclusion of the last regular session of the Fifth Committee. As we are now approaching the first resumed session of the Fifth Committee, to be held from 9 to 27 March 1998, I would like to wish you every success in the preparations for this meeting. In this regard, I would also like to bring to your attention some concerns of States members of the Group of 77 and China, in particular with regard to the delay in the issuance and submission of reports by the Secretariat.

Despite the fact that several specific resolutions of the General Assembly require the Secretariat to issue documents six weeks prior to their consideration, delay in the issuance of documents has become a chronic problem. In some cases, in fact, the documents were not available until after the meetings had already begun. To cite a few recent examples, first was the delay in the issuance of reports on gratis personnel, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 51/243 of 15 September 1997, to be submitted during the main part of its fifty-second regular session. Similarly, the report on upgrading of the technical and audio quality of conference rooms, requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/214 of 22 December 1997, has not yet been issued for consideration at the first part of the resumed fifty-second session. As a result, these delays could impede the work of the Fifth Committee and affect its ability to take action on such important issues.

I would therefore kindly request you to transmit this vital concern of the States members of the Group of 77 and China to the Secretary-General and to help foster effective measures to ensure that the six weeks rule is strictly complied with. I should be grateful if you would request that the text of the present letter be circulated as a document of the United Nations. I hope, with your active guidance, the resumed session will be successful in meeting its target.

(Signed) Arizal EFFENDI
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
for the Chairman of
the Group of 77

B. Letter dated 5 March 1998 from the Chairman of the Fifth Committee addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention a letter dated 26 February 1998 from the Acting Chairman of the Group of 77 expressing the concerns of the States members of the Group of 77 and China regarding the situation of documentation of the Fifth Committee.

In reviewing the organization of work of the Fifth Committee, the Bureau, at its meeting on 17 February, discussed, in particular, the question of the outstanding documentation on gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities, which had been requested for the main part of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly. Since the reports have to date not been issued, I requested the substantive office of the United Nations Secretariat to make every effort to have the documents in question available for consideration by the Fifth Committee during the first week of its forthcoming resumed session (9-27 March 1998).

In light of the request by the member States of the Group of 77 and China, I should be most grateful for your assistance in this matter.

I am also forwarding a copy of the present letter to the President of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Anwarul K. CHOWDHURY
Chairman of the Fifth Committee